

CLAIMS

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1. A method in a computer system for filtering unauthorized electronic mail messages that are sent by senders to a user, each sender having an identification, each electronic mail message including the identification of the sender, the method comprising:

- 5 providing a list of the identifications of the senders who are
- 6 authorized to send an electronic mail message to the user;
- 7 for each of a plurality of electronic mail messages,
- 8 determining whether the sender of the electronic mail
- 9 message is authorized by determining whether the identification of sender in the
- 10 electronic mail message is in the provided list of the identifications of the senders
- 11 who are authorized;
- 12 when the sender of the electronic mail message is
- 13 determined to be authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a first folder
- 14 designated for electronic mail messages received from authorized senders;
- 15 when the sender of the electronic mail message is
- 16 determined to be not authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a second
- 17 folder designated for electronic mail messages received from unauthorized
- 18 senders
- 19 whereby the electronic mail messages are automatically stored in
- 20 the appropriate folder based on whether the sender is authorized so that the user
- 21 can view the first folder containing the electronic mail messages sent by
- 22 authorized senders separately from the second folder containing the electronic
- 23 mail messages sent by unauthorized senders.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein when the user sends an

2 electronic mail message to a recipient, the identification of the recipient is

3 automatically added to the provided list of the identifications of senders who are

4 authorized to send electronic mail message to the user.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the provided list of the
2 identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of senders
3 of previously received electronic mail messages.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the provided list of the
2 identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of
3 recipients of previously sent electronic mail messages.

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1 5. A method in a computer system for filtering unauthorized
2 messages, each message having a sender, the method comprising:
3 for each of a plurality of messages,
4 determining whether the sender of the message is designated
5 as being authorized;
6 when the sender of the message is determined to be
7 authorized, indicating that the message is from an authorized sender; and
8 when the sender of the message is determined to be not
9 authorized, indicating that the message is from an unauthorized sender.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the recipient of the messages
2 can identify whether a message is authorized based solely on the indications.

1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein the message is indicated as
2 authorized by storing in a pre-designated location for messages sent by
3 authorized senders.

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1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the message is an electronic
2 mail message and the pre-designated location is a folder.

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9. The method of claim 5 including when displaying a list of
2 messages, displaying a visual indication as to whether the message has been
3 indicated as being sent from an authorized or unauthorized sender.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the visual indication is the
2 dimming of the messages that are sent from unauthorized senders in the list of
3 messages.

1 11. The method of claim 5 wherein the computer system
2 includes a list of authorized senders and wherein the determining whether the
3 sender of the message is designated as being authorized includes determining
4 whether the sender is in the list of authorized senders.

1 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the list of authorized
2 senders is generated by adding the senders of the previously received messages to
3 the list.

1 13. The method of claim 11 wherein the list of authorized
2 senders is generated by adding the recipients of the previously sent messages to
3 the list.

1 14. The method of claim 11 wherein the list is shared by
2 multiple users.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the computer system
2 includes a personal list of authorized senders that is personalized to the recipient
3 and wherein a messages is determined to be sent by a sender designated as
4 unauthorized when the sender is not in either list.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the other user sends a
2 forwarded message back to the recipient when the message should be viewed by
3 the recipient even though the sender is not authorized.

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1 sender list
2 electronic
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21. The system of claim 20 including an updated authorized sender list component that adds the identification of each recipient of sent electronic mail messages to the authorized sender list.

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1 24. The system of claim 20 wherein the provided indication is
2 the deletion of the forwarded electronic mail message.

5 providing a list of the identifications of the senders who are
6 authorized to send an electronic mail message to the user;

12 when the sender of the electronic mail message is
13 determined to be authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a first folder
14 designated for electronic mail messages received from authorized senders;

15 when the sender of the electronic mail message is
16 determined to be not authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a second
17 folder designated for electronic mail messages received from unauthorized
18 senders

19 whereby the electronic mail messages are automatically stored in
20 the appropriate folder based on whether the sender is authorized so that the user
21 can view the first folder containing the electronic mail messages sent by
22 authorized senders separately from the second folder containing the electronic
23 mail messages sent by unauthorized senders.

1 26. The method of claim 25 wherein when the user sends an
2 electronic mail message to a recipient, the identification of the recipient is
3 automatically added to the provided list of the identifications of senders who are
4 authorized to send electronic mail message to the user.

1 27. The method of claim 25 wherein the provided list of the
2 identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of senders
3 of previously received electronic mail messages.

1 28. The method of claim 25 wherein the provided list of the
2 identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of
3 recipients of previously sent electronic mail messages.